

SAVA 73-140

23 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William E. Colby

SUBJECT : General Davidson's 18 July Request

1. Attached for your consideration and -- if you like it -- signature is an interim response to Phil Davidson's letter.

2. The project in question could be of great value indeed, but I am afraid it will not be, and the sample appended to Phil's letter (alas) reinforces that skepticism. What our military brethren ought to be pondering (but will probably avoid) are Vietnam lessons such as:

- a. The need for candor.
- b. The need to develop, and face, facts regardless of what they implicitly say about past or ongoing U.S. programs (e.g., the size of the enemy's force and whether it is increasing, the volume of supplies moving through Laos in the face of interdiction, etc.).
- c. The essentiality of seeing the enemy -- and his tactics, goals, etc. -- in his terms, not forcing data on these topics into a procustean matrix based on our approach and organization.

3. If the committee would face up to matters such as the above, this exercise would be of tremendous value. The chances of its doing so, unfortunately, are minimal.

George A. Carver, Jr.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

Orig - Mr. Colby  
1 - GAC Chrono ✓  
1 - VAS Chrono



Approved For Release 2004/06/14 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000800100009-0

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

Lieutenant General Phillip B. Davidson, Jr., USA  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Intelligence)  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Phil:

I have your letter of 18 July sketching the committee established to compile the intelligence lessons learned at the major force levels during the Vietnamese war and inviting me to submit my views of the principal intelligence lessons learned in my tenure as Dep CORDS. The committee's task is a fascinating one and, of course, one in which I have a great interest, both personal and professional. I will try to dictate some thoughts and conclusions during the course of the coming week and will send them along to you.

Please keep me posted on your project as it evolves. It is an important undertaking and I would be very interested in seeing the final results.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

W. E. Colby

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# EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

## Routing Slip

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4	DDI				
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6	DDM&S				
7	D/DCI/IC		✓		
8	D/ONE				
9	OGC				
10	OLC				
11	IG				
12	D/PPB				
13	D/Pers				
14	D/OS				
15	D/Trng				
16	SAVA	✓			
17	ASST/DCI				
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### Remarks:

TO 16: Please prepare interim response for WEC signature + Mr Colby will prepare material called for in the week ahead.

Executive Secretary

Date



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Executive Registry  
73-4/05

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

INTELLIGENCE

18 JUL 1973

The Honorable William E. Colby  
Director, Central Intelligence  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Bill:

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Intelligence) has directed that a committee composed of Major General Potts, ACSI, USA; Major General Keegan, ACSI, USAF; Rear Admiral Rectanus, DNI, USN, and myself, be established to compile the intelligence lessons learned at the major force level (MACV, NavForV, USARV, 7th AF, Pac Fleet, PacAF, Field Force, 3d MAF, etc.) during the Vietnamese War.

It is not the intent of the committee to compile a history of intelligence organizations and operations, but rather to produce a study dealing with lessons which are timeless in nature. Lessons learned should be those which can be applied to future conflicts regardless of size, location, or the nature of the enemy. The study should make a positive contribution to the development of doctrines, research and development projects, Service school curricula, and to follow-on studies.


We would like to have your vantage-point views of the principal intelligence lessons you learned in the Southeast Asian War as Dep CORDS. We want your own words in this effort, and therefore we do not want to inhibit you in any way by prescribing a format. We would appreciate as much detail as possible, however, as pertains to special circumstances surrounding your lessons learned, as well as any rationale as to why a particular lesson is highlighted.

The material of the lessons may be of any classification, however, they must be administratively handled in accordance with appropriate security regulations.

To give you a clearer idea of what is wanted, we have attached an example of lessons learned as seen at this initial stage by the committee.

Since, as usual, we are fighting a tight deadline, we would appreciate your reply by 24 September 1973. Please address your response directly to me using the enclosed self-addressed DoD label.

Sincerely,



Phillip B. Davidson, Jr.  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(Intelligence)

2 Enclosures  
as stated

## USE OF INTELLIGENCE

One of the most profitable intelligence practices used in the Vietnamese War was the weekly dissemination of intelligence to COMUSMACV, his major Army, Navy, and Air Force commanders, and the MACV senior staff officers.

The device for doing this was the Weekly Intelligence Estimate Update (the WIEU). The WIEU was held every Saturday morning at the MACV all-source conference room. Regular attendees included COMUSMACV; CG, 7th Air Force; CG, USARV; COMNAVFORV; the civilian Deputy for CORDS; the civilian Scientific Advisor; the MACV J-2, J-3, J-4; several MACV Special Staff officers; and the A-2, 7th Air Force. On special occasions, Field Force commanders or Embassy officials were invited. The meeting invariably started with a 30-minute to one-hour presentation by the MACV J-2 Area Specialists on the enemy situation as developed over the last week ending with an intelligence estimate bearing on future enemy operations.

The J-2 presentation was subjected to stringent question and challenge by all members of the group. At the conclusion of the presentation, major commanders or COMUSMACV discussed the enemy and friendly situation, and frequently decisions and general plans were developed during this phase of the meeting.

The WIEU had several advantages: First, the enemy situation was thoroughly presented to and discussed by the conferees; second, alternate explanations of enemy actions were developed; third, the major commanders and senior staff officers became intensely conscious of the enemy situation and its impact of their decisions, plans, and operations; fourth, all in this key group knew the background and rationale of the major decisions made by COMUSMACV; above all, there was close communication between the J-2 and the commander -- the commander knew all the J-2 knew about the enemy, and the J-2 knew precisely the intelligence needs of the commander.